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SOME PASSAMAQUODDY WITCHCRAFT TALES.

BY J. DYNELEY PRINCE, PH.D.

(Read November 17, 1899.)

The following six tales of witchcraft were related to me during the summer of 1899 at Bar Harbour, Me., by Mr. Newell S. Francis, of the Passamaquoddy¹ tribe, now resident with his people, numbering some 500 to 600 souls in all, on their reservation at Pleasant Point, Me. (Pass. *Sibáiyik*). The chief interest of these stories lies in the facts, first, that they are the utterances of a comparatively intelligent Indian who firmly believes in the genuineness of the phenomena which he describes, and, secondly, that they were recorded by means of a phonograph, into which Mr. Francis spoke with great distinctness, thus enabling me to reproduce them with much greater phonetic exactness than if he had written them in the very imperfect system at present followed by the few Indians of this tribe who can write their language.

Any missionary to the Passamaquoddies, or to their kindred, the New Brunswick Maliseets, the Penobscots of Oldtown, Me., or the Micmacs and Abenakis of Quebec, will admit that belief in the ancient Shamanistic sorcery among these Indians has by no means died out. Among the Passamaquoddies and Maliseets² particularly there is still a perfect mine of material relating to the wizards and their power over other men and over the curious beings with which the Indians have peopled the mysterious forests of their country. It is to be regretted that more interest is not taken in this highly curious people, who in the course of fifty years are almost bound to disappear, but whose old men and women are still able to impart much that is very valuable both to the philologist and to the student of native American beliefs.³

¹ The word Passamaquoddy is a corruption of the Indian *Pĕstûmwôkâdyîk*, the plural of the participial formation *Pĕstûmwôk-âd* "he who catches the pollock-fish" from *Pĕskĭtûm-wôk* "pollock-fish," + *-âd*, participial ending. Cf. *Pönnâmwôk-âd* "he who catches frost-fish."

² The Maliseets, sometimes called St. John Indians, live in New Brunswick, on the river St. John. They are identical with the Maine Passamaquoddies in race and language. They are called in the native idiom: *Wĕlâstîk-wiyîk* "Indians of the river St. John (*Wĕlâstîk*)."

³ See Prince, *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.*, xxxvi, pp. 479-495; *Annals N.Y. Acad. Sci.*, xi, pp. 369-377.

In pre-Christian times the Passamaquoddies, like their other Algonkian kindred, were Shamanists, worshipers of the demons of the wilderness and the lakes, and firm believers in the almost unlimited power of their *m'déaulimwúk* or wizards, many of whom still exist, subordinately, of course, to the Catholic doctrine, which nearly all the Indians profess. Francis informs me that there are only three or four Protestant Passamaquoddy families.

A few specimens of these sorcerers' power are described below in the curiously curt style of Algonkian narrative. We see from the following tales that the wizards could transform themselves into animals at will (see tale i); that they could cast a spell or curse on an enemy, even though he might also be *m'déaulin* (tale ii); that they could violate the laws of nature so far as to walk in hard ground, sinking up to the ankles or knees at every step (tale iii), and, finally, that they could communicate with each other telepathically (tale iv). I need hardly comment on the first two and the fourth of these wonders, as they are common among all Shamanistic conjurers, but the third phenomenon, *e. g.*, the power to sink into hard ground while walking, is, I believe, characteristically American. Rink states that this is not an unusual feat among the conjurers of the Greenland Eskimo, who frequently sink into rocky and frozen ground "as if in snow." The trick is probably done by some peculiar way of stooping. Leland compares here, however, the Old Norse statements regarding their wizards, who occasionally sank into the ground and who had power to pass through earth with the same ease as through air or water (*Algonquin Legends*, p. 342). It would be hardly permissible to draw a parallel between the ancient Norsemen and the northern Indians on this account, as the case he cites is that of a conjurer who disappeared into the ground *head downwards*, when he was stabbed at by a foe. It should be noticed that in the following tale, my authority did not *see* the actual feat, but only the deep tracks of the wizard where he had sunk into the earth "the night before," as Francis expressed it in his explanation.

The fifth anecdote, of a cannibalistic feast, is highly interesting. The wizards here eat their murdered comrade, evidently with the idea of absorbing into themselves some or all of his power. The cannibalistic orgies of the South Sea Islanders should be compared with this practice. For example, the Fijis and the Maoris of New Zealand ate their enemies with the same object in view, *e. g.*, to

become as brave as the fallen foe had been. All authorities tend to show, however, that cannibalism was extremely rare among the American races, and was only resorted to in isolated cases like the one here noted.

The sixth tale, of the *kīwā'kw*, or snow-demon, is one of a great number. The Algonic Indian believed in many spirits, some benevolent like the *w'nāg'mēs'wā'k* or little people, who were wont to warn the tribesmen of impending danger,* some harmless like the wandering *kīwā'kw* or the *chib'lākwē*, the tree sprite, who sits in the crotch of the large branches, and some distinctly malevolent like the *āppōd'mē'n*, or spirit of the deep water who lurks in the lakes to drag down the unwary swimmer.

In the notation of the tales I have used the following system. The consonants are to be pronounced as in English, with the exception of *f* and *k*, which represent voiceless *tenués*; *ñ*, which is the French nasal *n*; *w*, the whistled initial peculiar to the Pass., Abn. and Lenape, and *'*, which is a guttural voice-stop, not unlike the Semitic *ayin*. When *n* and *m* are written in juxtaposition to a following consonant they have their simple nasal tone-value. The vowels, whose exact quantity I have marked in the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot, have the Italian values, except in the case of the apostrophe, *'*, which is a very short *ü*, and *ī*, which is equivalent to *oo* in "good."

The intonation of the Passamaquoddy dialect is difficult to acquire. In the narrative style, the syllables are spoken in what is nearly a monotone, until the tone syllable is reached, when the voice runs up a musical third and drops the same interval on the syllable after the accent. When a word has two accents, one following the other, as, for example, in *pōhē'gūnūl*, the first accented syllable is unusually prolonged in a sing-song tone and the second is marked by the voice-rise. These peculiarities are perfectly reproduced by the phonograph.

I have made the grammatical analysis following the tales, partly by means of a direct study of the Pass. itself and partly by means of a colloquial knowledge of the kindred Abenaki language of Canada, which is almost identical with the Penobscot idiom of Oldtown, Me., and is very close to the Lenape.

* Cf. Prince, *Annals N.Y. Acad. Sci.*, xi, p. 373.

I.

K'chī Joe Bénōit m'dēaulīn² pōhégūnūl³ k'chī k'nākwchīl.⁴ Ūmātn-
ntēniyāl⁵ k'd'gil skīṭāpyīl.⁶ Pōhégūnūl k'chī āt-hōzīswīl.⁷ M'dēaul-
īnwūk nē'sēyik⁸ t'līp'n'ltōwūk. Kīzīp'n'ltītīt⁹ m'sīdē nsēyō kūspēn.¹⁰
Nōdāmēn¹¹ Joe Bénōit kīstāhāl¹² k'd'gil skīṭāpyīl. Kīzīp'n'ltītīt k'dūk
skīṭāp mē'chīnē.¹³

II.

K'chī Lācōt(e) m'dēaulīn k'chī Sābātīssīz'l¹⁴ ūmātnntēniyāl. K'chī
Lācōt(e), unāji'tōn mskwīglāhégōn k'chī'kōk.¹⁵ Kīzī'tāq pīzēssīn.
wtūg'wēji'tōn wāgōnā'kwēm. W'mājētauk kēgēskw, Wāgōnā'kwēm
kwīllhōgān.¹⁶ Ūkwūssīz'l ūkīgw'hōgōl (ūsēb'mōyōgōl). W'gīchīji-
tōn¹⁷ Lācōte Sābātīssīz'l ūm'dēaulīnwīk-p'nīlkōl.

III.

Nīl nānānkō kēsīg'd'niyān n'mīhā skīṭāp m'dēaulīn'wēu līwīzō.¹⁸
Mī'kūmwēss. Nīōgūn¹⁹ ngīzī'kwēt'kēūs²¹ nāgā ngīzīkīnōslūggōn²²
ēd'lī kīzī'kwēt'kēūsēt. Nīl n'mītōn²³ ēlāptāk²⁴ wējōsēt.²⁵

IV.

N'mītaukws²⁶ nōd'wā ēd'līntauk nībāiyū ōt'līntūwēwāl wīdāpyīl.
Ūnōdāgōl ēd'līntauk-mēdētākw pīchēdōg ngwūtta t'kēssōsākwūt
t'līgēdōñkē.

V.

Nzīwēs nt'lāg'nōd'māk pīchē kīskākēsīgd'n māṭndōltītīt m'dēaulīn-
wūk. Pēsk'wōl²⁷ ūnēp'hānjā. Ūmājēp'hānjā Mnā'nōk ēd'lī-spāsē-
gēk. Nīt ēd'līpōltītīt.

VI.

Nīzwūk skīṭāpyīk t'līg'dōñkīyīk kūspēmūk. Slākīū ūnōd'wānjā
wēnīl²⁸ māskwūlāmīyīlījīl ēlmāg'mēk mē'tāg'mēk. Nōdausānjā—
āpch, ūnōd'wānjā māskwūlāmīyīlījīl. Ūnīmīyāwāl wēch'kōyālījīl.
Mālūm'dē pēchī'yīl ēyī'tīt. Ūtīyānjā: p'lchīnēss mīts.²⁹ Ō'tīd'mūn³⁰
yōt skīṭāp: kātāmā³¹ ngīzījēnēs-hīyū tētīnt'lī ēd'lī't'kēyīk³² lā'tōgwēss-
nūk. Yōt skīṭāp ēlwē'kāl kīwā'kw.

I.

Old Joe Benoit, the wizard, changed himself into a big turtle. He had quarreled with another man. The latter changed himself into a great serpent. The wizards fought together at *Nē'sēyik*.⁸ After the fighting, the lake was all stirred up. I heard that Joe Benoit beat the other man. After the fight the other man died.

II.

Old Lacote, the wizard, quarreled with old Sabatis.⁴ Old Lacote had made a dead-fall trap for bear in the woods. After he had made it, he crawled in (to test it). He pulled the prop-stick, touching it only a little. The prop-stick fell on him. His son (however) rescued him. Lacote knew that Sabatis had bewitched him.

III.

When I was fifteen years old, I saw a man who was a wizard. He was called a *Mikūmwēss*⁹ (a wood-devil). He told me that he had sunk into hard ground up to his ankles, and he showed me the place where he had done so. I saw the tracks where he had walked.

IV.

I heard my father (once) singing by night to his partner and he (the partner) heard him (my father) singing when he (the partner) was hunting a hundred miles away.

V.

My brother told me that many years ago certain wizards had a quarrel. They killed one (of their number). They brought him to Grand Manan,⁸ where there was a steep ledge and there they ate him.

VI.

Two men were hunting on a lake. Suddenly they heard some one whooping along the lake, at the foot of the lake. They went out, and again they heard him whooping. They saw him coming. Right up he comes to where they are. They said to him: "Won't you eat?". That man said: "I cannot stop; I must go to where it is cold, to the north." That man must have been a *Kiwā'kw*.⁴

GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS.

¹ *K'chi* means properly "big," but in Pass. and Abn. it is frequently used for "old;" cf. Abn. *ādālī k'chiāwīt* "he who is oldest" (participle). Oj. *kitchi*, Cree *k'chi* mean "big." In Oj., however, the prefix *kele-*, clearly allied to *k'chi*, means "old." Both the Del. *chingē* "big" and *kikey* "old" (modern *kikes* "adults, parents") undoubtedly belong here. I doubt, however, whether we should compare with this root, as Brinton does (*Lenâpé*, pp. 102-4), the large class of derivatives in Del. beginning with *gisch-*, used to denote successful action, as in *gischigin* "to begin life, to be born;" *gischilon* "he makes it ready;" Abn. *kizitō*, etc. The Cree *kije-* "perfect" (Lacombe, *Dict. de la Langue des Cris*, s. v.) may be cognate here.

² *M'déwulīn* "wizard" appears in old Del. as *meteu* "one who drums," e. g., a witch-doctor, referring to the practice of the medicine men of beating drums to drive away evil spirits. Thus, Del. *meteohet* is a drum or any hollow body. In mod. Del., *meteu* denotes a turkey-cock, which drums with its wings (so Anthony in Brinton, *Lenâpé Dict.*, p. 83). Cf. Oj. *mēdēwīn* "sorcery" and *ṭēwē-igē* "he beats a drum" (*ṭēwē-igūn* "drum").

³ In *pōhégūnūl* and the following word, we have the ending *-ūl* of the obviative, or accus. of the third person, which appears in all the Algonic idioms.

⁴ *K'nākwchīl* "turtle" (note the obv. *-īl* as object of *pōhégūnūl*) is an exact cognate of abn. *Mikēnākw* "turtle." Compare Micmac *mīkchīkch*, Oj. *mīshikē* "turtle."

⁵ *Ūmātnēnīyāl*, also in the obv., is clearly cognate with Del. *machtlenāṭittin*, *machtlayen* "to quarrel."

⁶ In *skīṭāp* "man" (*-yūl*, obv. ending), sometimes *ūskīṭāp*, we evidently have the ending *-āpē*, which is used in Del. as the regular terminal to denote the human male. Thus, *lēn-āpē* "a Del. Indian" (*lēno* "man" + *āpē*). With *lēno*, cf. Cr. *ūlīl*, Oj. *īmīl*, O. Abn. *ārēn-ānēbē*, Mod. Abn. *āln-ōmbā*, O. Narragansett *nin*, Naugatuck *rinh*, etc. Del. *kik-āpē*, "a bachelor," is formed in the same way. Brinton (*Len.*, p. 100) derives *-āpē* from a root *ap* "to cover sexually," which he states appears in Oj., used only of the lower animals. I cannot find it so applied. This *-āpē*, however, is found in O. Abn. *ārēn-ānēbē*, Modern Abn. *āln-ōmbā* (Penobscot *āln-āmbā*) "indian," and in old Mass. *wusketomp* "man," exactly equivalent to

ndēlīwīzī "I am called; *kd-ŋlīwī-t-āmēn* "you call it," etc. The same root appears in Del. *wdellowunsowagan* "name." The Abn., however, drops the element *li* in the substantive *wīzōwōngān* "name."

¹⁹ The *Mi'kūmwēss* is a wood-spirit which may become the familiar of a wizard; the Passamaquoddies say, of a certain *m'déaulīn*; *mī'kūmwēss-ū'kē* "he is partner with a *mī'kūmwēss*. The wizard in this story was evidently in possession of such a familiar.

²⁰ *Nŋōgūn* consists of the prefix of the 1 p. sing. *n-*, the connecting consonant *-t-*, the root *ī* and the suffix *-gūn* "he." For this root, cf. *n-ī-i-dām* "I say;" Abn. *nd-īl-gōn* "he says to me." The prefix *n-* and suffix *-gūn* with the root infix always mean "he . . . to me;" cf. Abn. *ngīz-āgākīm-gōn* "he taught me," and see below note 22.

²¹ *Ngīzīkēwētkēūs* is direct oration "I sank into the ground." *Kīzī* (see above note 9) becomes *gīzī* here by partial assimilation to the preceding nasal.

²² *Ngīzīkīnōslūggōn* cf. the remarks above, note 20, on *nŋōgūn*.

²³ *N'mīlōn* "I see it" (inan.). The animate form is *n'mihā*, as above *n'mihā skīlāp* "I see (him) a man."

²⁴ *Ēlāptāk*, cf. Abn. *ālōmtōk* "tracks which he made" (partc.).

²⁵ *Wējōsēt*, partc. 3 p. "which he made."

²⁶ To illustrate the similarity between the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, I give here the Penobscot version of this and the following anecdote. In the Pen. dialect every syllable receives equal voice-stress.

IV.

Nōdāwā n'mītaugūs ēdālīntōkw nībāihī ōdālīntōwēwāl wīdāmbāl. Ūnōdāngōl wīdāmbāl ēdālīntōkw nāwādōgē ngwūdātkwē tkēssōsōng-wāt tāligāddōnkē.

V.

Nījā ndōndōnkēūkw nauwāt kīzgōngēsīgād'n āwōdihīdwāk m'dēolīnwāk. Pēzgōwāl ūnīhlāōnl. Ūmōnjīphānā Muā'nōgē ēdālī spāsēgēk ēdālī pōldihīdīt.

²⁷ *Pēskwōl* must of course be obviative as the object of the verb *ūnēp'hāniā* in the 3 p.

²⁸ *Manan*, Abn. *mēnāhān*, Pass. *m'nā'n*, means "island."

²⁹ *Wēnīl*, obv. case of *wēn* "who, someone;" cf. Abn. *āwānī*, Del. *auwen*, Oj. *āwēnēn*.

³⁰ Pass. *n'mīts*; Abn. and Del. *n'mīzī* "I eat."

³¹ This is a combination of ʃ, 3 p. prefix, the connecting consonant *l*, the root *ī* (see above note 20), and *-āmēn*, the inanimate ending.

³² *Kātāmā* "not." *Kāt* or *skāt* is the neg. element, cf. the Del. *taku*, an excellent example of metathesis.

³³ *Ēd' lī- l' kēyik*. *Ēd' lī* is the relative particle "which, where;" *l' kē* appears in Abn. *l' kā*, Del. *tehek* (sbst.) "cold."

³⁴ The *kīwā'kw* is essentially a cold demon, rejoicing in snow and ice. An old Indian told me that his father had seen one running on the snow-crust without snow shoes as swiftly as a deer.

Stated Meeting, December 1, 1899.

Vice-President SELLERS in the Chair.

Present, 23 members.

The resignation of Hon. Wayne McVeagh was read and on motion accepted.

Donations to the Library were announced and thanks were ordered therefor.

Prof. Lewis M. Haupt read a paper entitled "Failure of Dams and Reservoirs."

The annual reports of the Treasurer, the Curators and the Standing Committees were presented.

The Trustees of the Building Fund made a report, which was ordered to be spread upon the Minutes and referred to the Finance Committee.

The Society was then adjourned by the presiding officer.